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Houston's KPFT, Two Bombs Later, Tries to Rebuild

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HOUSTON, Oct. 23—The operators of KPFT, a noncommercial FM radio station that has been bombed off the air twice in six months, have begun scrambling for money to resume broadcasting and are demanding that the Federal Bureau of Investigation find out who blew up their transmitters.

Lawrence R. Lee, the general manager of the station, said it may be necessary to raise \$185,000 to get the station, which specialized in in-depth news coverage and the airing of controversial and unpopular opinions, back into operation. "The insurance companies won't touch us now, and this is making it hard," Mr. Lee said.

The station is owned by the Pacifica Foundation, which also operates radio stations in New York City, Los Angeles and Berkeley, Calif.

No arrests have been made in either of the dynamite explosions here, which took place on May 18 and Oct. 6, although there have been wide reports that a splinter group of the

Ku Klux Klan has claimed credit.

The Harris County sheriff's office reported that it had been unable to prove who set off the dynamite, and a request for an F.B.I. investigation, widely backed in the broadcasting industry, has not been acted upon.

KPFT, which is supported by listener subscriptions of \$24 a year, was able to resume broadcasting about three weeks after the first dynamiting. But Mr. Lee said that because of its inability to obtain insurance, the station has not been able to lease a tower after the second explosion.

Mr. Lee is a 29-year-old reporter who worked for both The Associated Press and United Press International before joining KPFT, which began operation on March 1 of this year.

"We may have to build entirely new facilities to get back on the air," he said. This could cost up to \$100,000, with the remaining \$85,000 that is being sought used to cover additional operating expenses, he said.

The station is a cooperative, and each of the 11 paid employees receives \$125 a week. Some program production and broadcasting has been done by volunteers.

Mr. Lee said that one-fourth of the money needed is in sight.

KPFA News transcribed from tape

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Federal agents arrested three men late Friday night [15 Jan] near Houston, Texas, and charged them with conspiracy to travel to California to bomb KPFA and the Pacifica station in Los Angeles, KPFK. The three men are all residents of Pasadena, a suburb of Houston.

A spokesman for the FBI said that Ku Klux Klan literature and a loaded .45 caliber pistol were found in the car the men were travelling in. He said the men were charged with conspiracy to violate Federal law by "depriving the right of free speech as guaranteed in the Constitution."

The Pacifica station in Houston, KPFT, was bombed last May and again last October and has been off the air since the October bombing.

The FBI spokesman said the arrests Friday night were made after an extensive investigation by the FBI and by local police agencies. He did not say whether the men arrested are suspected of participating in the bombings of KPFT, but he said they will be questioned about those incidents.